THE GUARDSMAN

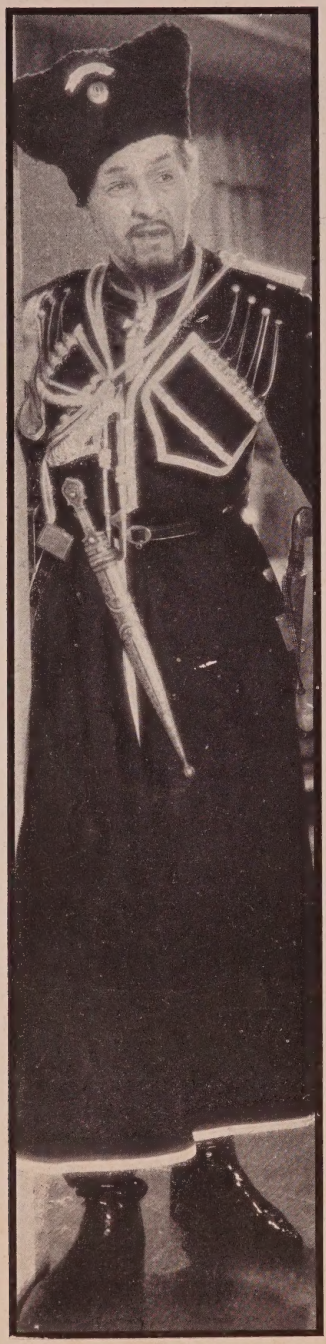
A METRO GOLDWYN MAYER PICTURE

ALFRED LUNT AND LYNN FONTANNE

25¢

ALFRED LUNT

LYNN FONTANNE



METRO-
GOLDWYN-
MAYER

presents

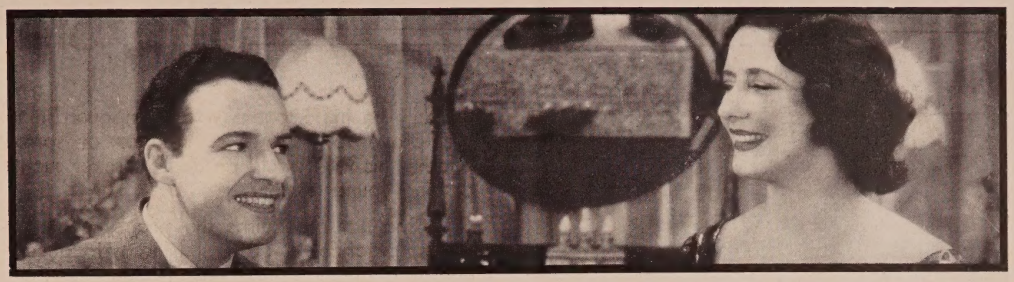
ALFRED LUNT

and

LYNN
FONTANNE

by Courtesy of the
THEATRE GUILD
in a Picturization of Their
Greatest Stage Success

"THE GUARDSMAN"

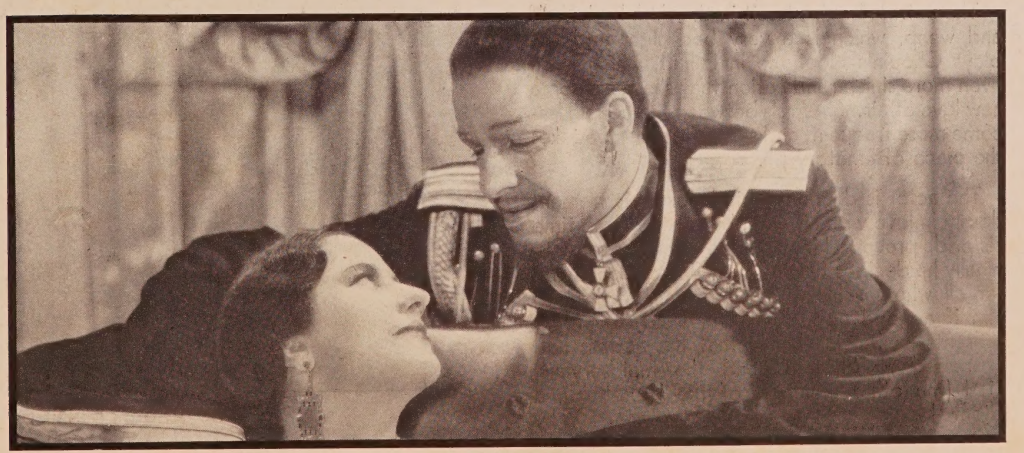


THE CAST

The Actor	ALFRED LUNT
The Actress	LYNN FONTANNE
The Critic	ROLAND YOUNG
Liesl	ZASU PITTS
"Mama"	MAUDE EBURNE
A Creditor	HERMAN BING

Director: SIDNEY FRANKLIN
Author: FERENC MOLNAR
Screen Play by: ERNEST VAJDA
Continuity by: CLAUDINE WEST
Photographed by: NORBERT BRODINE
Film Editor: CONRAD A. NERVIG

HISTORY: "The Guardsman," a comedy by Ferenc Molnar, was produced by the Theatre Guild, Inc., at the Garrick Theatre, New York, October 13, 1924, with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in the leading roles.



The Story o

HOW ARDENTLY A GUARDSMAN WOOS!

ONCE upon a time there was a famous actor, and a famous actress, and a famous critic, and they all lived in Vienna. . . .

Before the actress had accepted the actor as her husband she had indulged in more or less serious flirtations with many different men, and she was said to be incapable of remaining constant in her affections for more than a few months at a time. Now, after six months of wedded life, the actor thinks he can detect signs of an impending extra-marital romance.

The actress begins to sit in the dark by herself and weep, which is a very bad sign, and she plays Chopin's Nocturne in E Flat, which is an even more sinister indication that she seeks some new love affair. Quarrels between the couple become more frequent, and sarcastic repartee takes the place of amatory phrases.

The actor is deeply worried, for he is tremendously in love with his wife, but at the same time his pride prevents him from showing how he feels. Finally he decides that he must find out once and for all whether his wife will remain faithful to him if a good opportunity for illicit adventure presents itself. He knows that the actress had expressed to "Mama" and the maidservant, Liesl (the other members of the household), a latent longing for a military intrigue. Why couldn't he impersonate a Russian guardsman, and prove to his own satisfaction or sorrow whether his wife would be able to resist such a dashing young officer?

So the actor acquires the proper accoutrements, practices a guttural Muscovite accent, adopts the name Prince Wassily Samsonov, and day after day parades before the front of his own home until finally he attracts the attention of his wife and smiles at her. Patiently the process is continued until it is possible to send a note—attached to a bouquet of roses—asking for a personal meeting. At the same time the actor sends a fictitious telegram to himself, by which he is summoned to the neighboring town of Olmutz for a three-day engagement.

Meantime the critic, who is the confidant of both husband and wife, has entered into the secret of the actor's little game. Seeing the figure of the guardsman outside the actress' window, he finds it strangely familiar, and follows to ask a question or two. The guardsman begins to run and the critic follows as fast as his shorter legs will carry him. He reaches the house where the actor changes garments, enters and learns the truth. But in spite of his plea that the dangerous experiment be dropped, the actor insists on carrying through his original plan.

The actor leaves for Olmutz and half an hour later the ornately decorated guardsman appears

A HOUSEHOLD COUNCIL PONDERS OVER TH

at the actress' home. Words of polite admiration lead to much more fervent expressions. The actress goes from the room, and the husband rejoices. A second later she reappears to say she may have been too hasty, and dismisses the guardsman with the promise that she will see him again.

The actor decides to reappear and drop the part he is playing. But when he turns up and says he has missed the train, his wife's manner leads to a new train of jealous thoughts and he makes a second departure and dons his guardsman make-up in secret.

That night, when the actress and "Mama" are sitting in their box at the opera, the guardsman stalks on the scene. Between the acts, in the anteroom, he makes love to the actress. He is rebuffed but the look she gives him as she departs is by no means a satisfactory proof of her fidelity.

"Follow her, she expects it," advises the critic, who has just found his friend at the opera. "If you don't follow her now you will never know." The guardsman dashes out, and the critic adds, under his breath: "And neither will I."

Pursuing the actress by cab, while the critic follows in another cab, the guardsman catches up to the actress just as she is entering her home. He begs her to let him come in, just for a few minutes, and is secretly overjoyed when she closes

ROBLEM OF KEEPING THE HUSBAND AWAY

CAMOUFLAGE AND PERSIFLAGE

the door in his face. But a moment later his happiness turns to disillusionment when the actress raises an upper window and throws down a key. . . .

The next afternoon the husband returns unexpectedly from his engagement, a short time before the guardsman is scheduled to call to see the actress. Determined to end the byplay and expose his wife, the actor goes to his bedroom and quickly puts on the make-up of the guardsman. Then he confronts his wife. She stares at him, then bursts into a peal of laughter and cries, "You surely don't imagine I was taken in?"

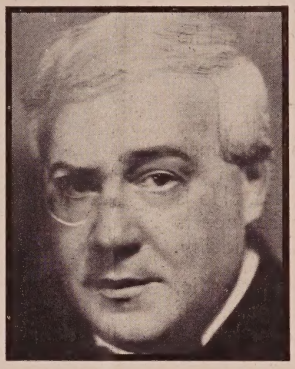
The actor insists that no one could have recognized him in his Russian dress, but his argument is weakened when a creditor comes in and promptly "spots" him. Finally his desire to believe that his wife may have been playing a game with him all the time leads him to accept her explanation. The critic enters the room, and the actor turns to him.

"How clever she is!" he cries. "She knew me from the moment I entered the house."

"No!" answers the critic incredulously. Then, as the actor kneels before his wife, he catches the actress' eye. She nods slightly, as if to say, "Yes," but her faintly smiling expression might be interpreted in a very different way.

"Hungary's Chief Export"

TWENTY-THREE years ago Ferenc Molnar made his first appearance on the American scene with "The Devil," a fantastic drama not unlike Goethe's "Faust" in its central theme, with George Arliss in the leading role. In the two decades and more that have elapsed since Henry W. Savage presented "The Devil" on a New York stage the prestige of the Hungarian dramatist has steadily increased, until now a score of dramatic offerings and fully thirty books may be listed to his credit. Molnar may not be as prolific as Edgar Wallace, but his literary output has never slackened since the publication of his first novel in 1900, and during most recent seasons he has been represented on the New York stage by one or more plays.



FERENC MOLNAR

"The Guardsman," in which Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne make their first screen appearance, is the third Molnar play to be presented as a talking picture, following "Olympia" (carrying the screen title, "His Glorious Night") and the picturization of "Liliom." "The Swan," "Fashions for Men" and "The Devil" were also made into silent photoplays. "The Play's the Thing" and "One, Two, Three" were the most recent Molnar plays seen in New York, both being produced by Gilbert Miller, who will next produce Molnar's "The Good Fairy."

In his favorite "thumbnail biography," Molnar summarizes his career as follows: "1878, I was born in Budapest; 1896, I became a law student at Geneva; 1896, I became a journalist in Budapest; 1897, I wrote a short story; 1900, I wrote a novel; 1902, I became a playwright at home; 1907, I became a playwright abroad; 1914, I became a war correspondent; 1916, I became a playwright once more; 1918, my hair turned snow-white; 1925, I should like to be a law student once more."

The late David Belasco, who presented Molnar's play, "The Devil," in association with Harrison Grey Fiske, and produced "The Tale of the Wolf," in 1914, as well as "Mima," made this comment about the Hungarian dramatist in an introduction to a collected volume of Molnar's plays published in 1929 by the Vanguard Press:

"From my first acquaintance with his writings I marked Molnar as a dramatist of original and fearless mind, whose work evinces lively contempt for hide-bound conventionality, quick apprehension alike of the humor and the pathos of human experience, keen sympathy with the wretched and miserable, extraordinary constructive faculty, unerring dramatic instinct and a satisfying, sinewy vitality of style."

This statement was supplemented in the same book by a portrait of Molnar prepared by Louis Rittenberg, who has translated some of Molnar's works. Mr. Rittenberg evidently regards the noted playwright as a unique combination of scoffer and sentimentalist, for he wrote:

"Despite his cynicism, Molnar is a sentimentalist. Add to this a remarkable skill in creating the unexpected, and a humor that amuses by its very subtlety, and you have a combination difficult to resist. Above all, there is in every Molnar play and narrative a deep undercurrent of pity and tenderness. There are no real villains among his characters, nor are they ever placed against a sordid background. . . .

"A sparkling conversationalist and matchless raconteur, when in the mood he will readily discourse on almost any subject. His searching irony and sardonic wit often tilt unmercifully against friend and foe, but there always follows a climax of soothing tenderness, of remorse at having caused pain. His cynicism is usually directed at those who dare mistake mediocrity for talent. Primarily, even in his informal conversation, he aims to portray life as he sees it unfolding about him, and without the presumptuousness of a social crusader to criticize it. Individuals and institutions alike are unspared by his lance, which, however, is dipped more often in pity than in gall.

"Although somewhat of a recluse, Molnar can also be jovial. The intimate few who know him vow that he has few equals for social ability and as an entertainer whose rocket-like wit can keep a group of appreciative spirits convulsed with laughter. On such rare occasions, he is the true jester, even the clown.

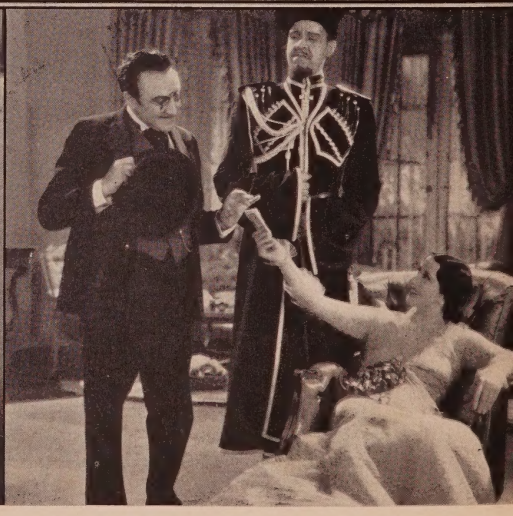
"Nor is it generally known that Molnar is an accomplished musician—a composer as well as a critic. He plays the piano, violin, and 'cello, besides boasting a fine voice. He can improvise lyrics with equal facility in Hungarian, German and French. When among friends, he is likewise a matchless toastmaster; no one cares about food while he acts the conferenciere. He himself is a gourmet and takes great pride in personally preparing his pet Hungarian dishes for his foreign guests. And he sketches skilfully, too. He not only designs the settings of his plays, but also draws studies of the characters and tries to pick the players accordingly.

"Molnar's method of playwriting is also different. He may bear the seed of a play in his mind for years, think out its every angle, then write it, usually in long hand—in two or three nights. His manuscripts are scarcely ever altered; he eschews everything that is superfluous. This economy of words is probably a natural result of his grasp of directing essentials. The Hungarian writing profession, as a whole, particularly in the dramatic field, is deeply indebted to him, for, despite the handicap of an isolated tongue, and a scarcely known nationality, Molnar has been truly a trail-breaker in creating an interest abroad for what is now Hungary's chief export."

THE JEALOUS HUSBAND—

AND THE SCHEMING LOVER

INTERESTING EPISODES



ROM THE PHOTOPLAY

Odds and Ends

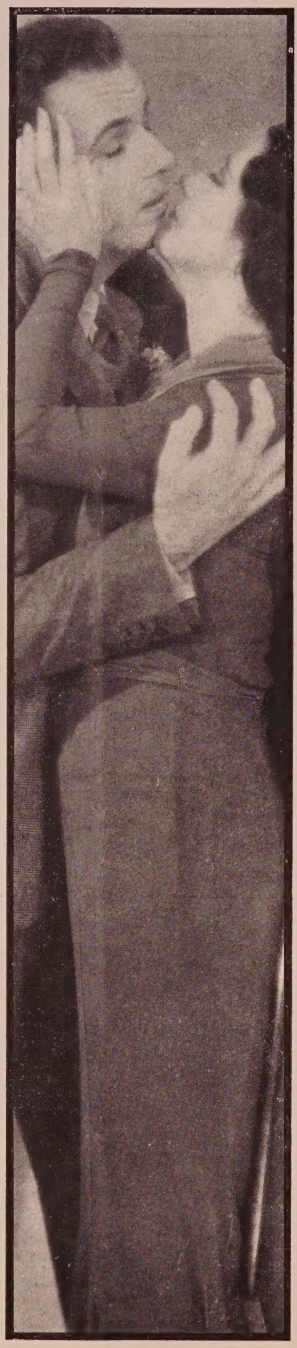
Ernest Vajda, who prepared the screen adaptation of Molnar's "The Guardsman," suffers from a prevailing mispronunciation of his name. Americans, invariably, pronounce it "Vad-jah" when it really should be "Void-ah."

On completion of their first screen vehicle, "The Guardsman," Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne left Hollywood for their farm near Milwaukee, Wis. They have this fixed up in typical Swedish farmhouse style, and it contains their large collection of Scandinavian antiques. After a vacation there the couple came on to New York to start work in the Theatre Guild play, "Reunion in Vienna."

Maude Eburne, character actress in "The Guardsman," has much trouble because of her unusual name. Once, she says, a New York producer wired her to come on for a part. A chorus girl in another show, named Maude E. Burns, received the wire and went on . . . to find that the part was one calling for a "mother" type.

Roland Young, the English character actor who plays the critic in "The Guardsman" has one of the most novel hobbies in the show world. He collects tiny carved penguins in ivory and wood, and has over two hundred of them in his private collection.

Although he was born in Milwaukee, Alfred Lunt received much of his schoolboy education near Helsingfors, Finland, the home of his stepfather. Lunt speaks Finnish fluently but is always complaining because he has no one to talk to.



"The stage was never like this!" sighed Alfred Lunt, as he sank back into a bed at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios for a comfortable nap. Lunt had a long bedroom scene in "The Guardsman." Between scenes, while cameras were being reloaded and lights "set," he merely sank back in bed for a few minutes' sleep.

Ernest Vajda, who wrote the screen play of Molnar's, "The Guardsman," in which Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne make their first screen appearance, has perhaps the strangest named birthplace on record. He was born in Pappa, Hungary. Vajda won two prizes when he graduated from the University of Budapest. One was for a translation of a play from the original Greek; the second for an explanation of the electron theory which is now occupying the attention of Professors Millikan, Einstein and others.

When Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne were making "The Guardsman," for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer they found an old friend working on the very next stage. Helen Hayes was starring there in "Lullaby." Some years ago Miss Hayes appeared with Lunt in "Clarence," his first outstanding dramatic success.

Alfred Lunt relates that he had to take lessons in Russian to perfect his pronunciation for his work in "The Guardsman," when this play was first produced on the stage in 1924 and again when he "brushed up" his knowledge of Russian for the filming of the play. It is as a Russian officer that Lunt disguises himself when he wishes to test his wife's love, by courting her in disguise.

Theatre Guild Stars Praise Hollywood Efficiency

ALFRED LUNT and Lynn Fontanne had come to be listed among the steadily dwindling group of stage irreconcilables who would never listen to the call of Hollywood, when in April, 1931, they signed a contract to act together in a talking picture under the auspices of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The first product of this alliance of the two Theatre Guild stars with the movies is the picturization of Molnar's comedy, "The Guardsman."

It was in the Theatre Guild stage presentation of "The Guardsman" that Lunt and Miss Fontanne scored perhaps their greatest co-starring success, during the theatrical season of 1924-25.

Although the couple admit that they were very skeptical at first about film work when they arrived in California and started work in "The Guardsman" both of them feel very definitely now that talking pictures provide a stimulating and provocative field of activity for any stage player, and that pictures are continually exercising a greater appeal for the so-called urban sophisticated audience.

"The thing that disappointed Miss Fontanne and myself," remarked Lunt, "is that apparently the situations are no longer in existence on which George Kaufman and Moss Hart based 'Once in a Lifetime.' It's odd, of course, that they should have been put out of the way in such a brief space of time—it's only a year since the play opened, isn't it?

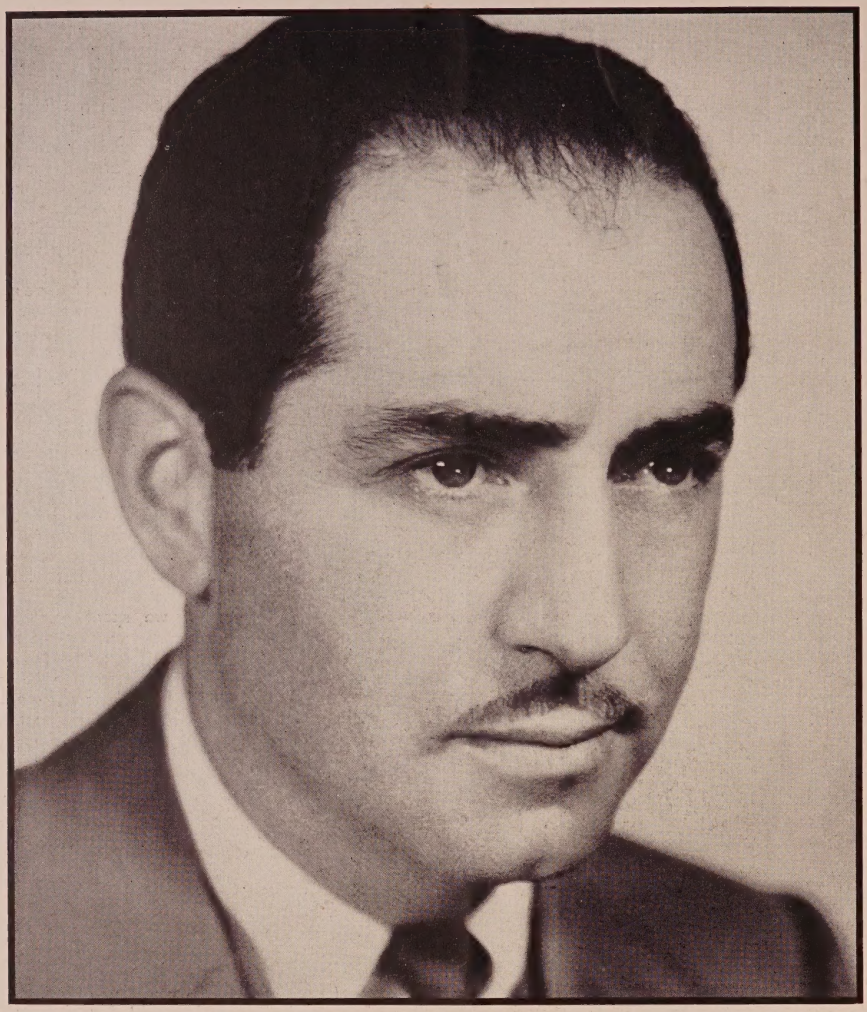
"We intended to spend our first week in Hollywood looking for the luxurious leisure which the stars and directors were supposed to enjoy. But we didn't get a chance to do this, because the day of our arrival we were asked to report for work, with make-up on, at nine the next morning. When we did visit friends on Sundays or go out in the evening we were still at a loss to locate much luxury or leisure.

"Neither of us ever worked so hard in our lives as during the time in California, and we've put in some rather intensive periods of work for the Theatre Guild. Perhaps the thing that was most difficult was the necessity for a repetition of scenes, doing the same speech over ten or fifteen times in one morning. Since this business of repeating a scene and taking the best rendering is an ineradicable part of pictures, one has to get used to it. Of course, there are many times when two or three shootings of a sequence are enough, but there were few days when we spent less than ten hours on the set.

"I guess the strongest impression we received on the coast was that of the efficiency of a big picture lot. Schedules are carefully made out and in the main closely adhered to. The make-up man was the most punctual individual in the world, coming to our dressing rooms at a certain hour each morning and properly reprimanding us if we were a few minutes late. The cameraman came over regularly to inspect our make-ups before we went on the set. I remember saying jokingly to a friend last spring that we were going to take a summer vacation in California. I feel properly punished for it."

Although the screen contract which Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne signed gives them the opportunity to return to California next spring or summer for a second picture, it was expressly understood from the start that their film activity would in no way interfere with their engagements with the Theatre Guild.

ALFRED LUNT AND LYNN FONTANNE CHAT WITH ROBERT MONTGOMERY DURING AN INTERLUDE IN FILMING "THE GUARDSMAN"



Director SIDNEY FRANKLIN

SIDNEY FRANKLIN'S RECORD

SIDNEY FRANKLIN, who made his debut in the field of spoken pictures so successfully with Norma Shearer's "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney," has directed a number of photoplays that stand out as landmarks in motion picture annals. Among them are "Smilin' Through," with Norma Talmadge; "Beverly of Graustark," with Marion Davies, and "East Is West," with Constance Talmadge. Franklin's newest picture, following "The Guardsman," is a picturization of Noel Coward's "Private Lives," with Norma Shearer and Robert Montgomery.

In the early days of motion pictures Sidney Franklin and his brother Chester decided that they wished to do directorial work. They showed their ability with an independent venture, "The Baby," a five hundred foot melange, and in a few years both had attained prominence in their chosen profession.

"To be a successful director, try handling children," is Sidney Franklin's cryptic recommendation. For years he and his brother concentrated on films employing juvenile casts, turning out such pictures as "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Ali Baba" and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp."

LUNT'S IDEAS OF DIET

Alfred Lunt is frequently asked by gentlemen of expanding waistlines how he keeps perenially slender and fit. Lunt's physique and build are among the best of any celebrity of the stage or screen.

The actor's prescription for keeping thin is a simple one. He never eats breakfast, in the ordinary sense of that word. His morning meal is made up of black coffee, without sugar or cream, and a single piece of unbuttered Swedish bread. A salad of greens suffices for lunch. Dinner is his big meal of the day, with meat, dessert and everything else permitted.

"There is no trick in keeping down to proper weight," said the Theatre Guild star. "Most of us eat several times more than we need to sustain life. One meal a day is all that is necessary to keep a man in proper shape. The other two gastronomical interludes are merely concessions to the general habit of stopping three times daily to visit the dinner table. Anyone can avoid excess weight. Don't eat too much, avoid pills and excessive sweets, and get in some muscular activity. That's all there is to it, but people will try all kinds of nostrums before limiting their quantity of food."

ROLAND YOUNG

was born in London, educated at University College, went on the stage directly afterwards and appeared in outstanding dramatic successes both in this country and abroad before he signed a long-term contract for motion picture work. His subtle and adroit sense of comedy characterization showed to excellent advantage on the stage in such plays as "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" and "The Queen's Husband," and in such films as "Madam Satan," "New Moon" and the current picturization of "The Guardsman."

ZASU PITTS

was born in Parsons, Kansas, the daughter of Rulandus Pitts, a farmer. She was taken to Santa Cruz, California, when less than two years old, and was educated there. Her first motion picture was Mary Pickford's "The Little Princess," and her great emotional characterization in Eric Von Stroheim's "Greed" established her as an actress of great versatility and talent. Recently she has been seen more frequently in comedies than drama, and she is being co-starred with Thelma Todd in a series of short features produced by Hal Roach.

A Famous Stage Couple

ALFRED LUNT and Lynn Fontanne, stars of many Theatre Guild productions of recent years, make their initial appearance from the speaking screen in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's picturization of "The Guardsman."

The 1924-25 Theatre Guild stage presentation of Ferenc Molnar's Viennese comedy proved one of the most popular co-starring vehicles for Lunt and Miss Fontanne, and this story property was selected for the first screen effort of the couple after consideration of dozens of scripts. The two stars went to the coast to begin work in "The Guardsman" immediately after completing their road tour last spring in "Elizabeth, the Queen." Further motion picture plans will be deferred until completion of their current stage season, with "Reunion in Vienna," the first of their new plays.

Lunt and Miss Fontanne, who until last spring had refused all offers to appear together on the screen, are perhaps the best-known stage couple in the world. They were married shortly after their first meeting, eight years ago, in Washington, D. C., and during their career with the New York Theatre Guild have been co-starred in ten productions. These comprise "The Guardsman," "Goat Song," "The Brothers Karamazov," "At Mrs. Beam's," "Arms and the Man," "The Doctor's Dilemma," "Caprice," "The Second Man," "Meteor" and "Elizabeth, the Queen." Lunt has been seen separately in a number of Guild productions, notably "Juarez and Maximilian," "Ned McCobb's Daughter" and "Volpone," while Miss Fontanne played without the histrionic support of her husband in "Pygmalion" and "Strange Interlude."

STARS OF THE STAGE AND SCREEN: ALFRED LUNT AND LYNN FONTANNE

Lunt was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is the son of the late Alfred Lunt, a lumberman, and Harriett Lunt. His mother remarried, and after Alfred was ten, for three years he lived near Helsingfors, Finland, with his stepfather. Then he returned to this country and was educated at Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin. (In 1930 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from this institution.)

Lunt studied to be an architect but developed a great interest in the stage and went to the Castle Square Garden stock company in Boston, where he got a job at $5 a week, later being raised to $15. He went on the road for several seasons as Margaret Anglin's leading man in her Greek plays, also appearing in "As You Like It" and "Green Stockings." His first great individual hit was in "Clarence," and other early plays include "Robert E. Lee" and "Banco."

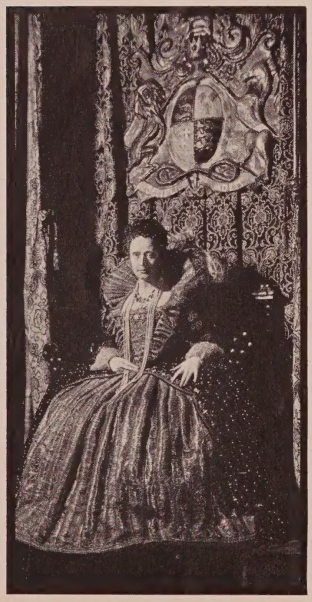
Miss Fontanne was born in London, England. For the benefit of screen fans it may be said that she is five feet, five inches tall, weighs 130 pounds, has black hair and brown eyes. Her father, Jules, was of French descent, and is now living in Wellington, New Zealand. Miss Fontanne was educated in London. She had played small parts there on the stage when she was brought to America at sixteen by Laurette Taylor, then a reigning American star. With Miss Taylor she appeared in "The Wooing of Eve," "The Harp of Life" and other successes. Then she established a reputation in her own right, extending from the days of "In Love With Love" and "Dulcy," to her present screen debut.

Did You See These Plays?

ALFRED LUNT AS LOUIS DUBEDAT
IN "THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA"

LYNN FONTANNE AS MRS. KENDALL
FRAYNE IN "THE SECOND MAN"

ALFRED LUNT AS THE EARL OF ESSEX
IN "ELIZABETH, THE QUEEN"



LYNN FONTANNE AS ELIZABETH
IN "ELIZABETH, THE QUEEN"

ALFRED LUNT AS COUNSELOR ALBERT
VON ECHARDT IN "CAPRICE"

LYNN FONTANNE AS ILSA VON ILSEN
IN "CAPRICE"

"Highbrow" Defined

THAT the expression "highbrow" is the most misused and misunderstood term in the English language is the contention of Lynn Fontanne, famous New York stage star, who makes her first screen appearance in "The Guardsman." Miss Fontanne points to the fact that the Theatre Guild has built up a membership of 30,000 in a little more than ten years.

"And it is all because we stuck to being 'highbrow,'" said Miss Fontanne. "The word has come to have a warped significance, one of semi-contempt. It doesn't indicate anything of the sort. A thing that is highbrow is something that stimulates the intelligence.

"Practically every plot done at the Theatre Guild has been done before. Certainly the situation in 'The Guardsman,' that of a man making love to his own wife, is anything but new. The only thing Molnar added in the way of a 'highbrow' touch was treatment. We believe that there are two ways of treating any dramatic scene: first, crudely and obviously, with carelessly chosen words; or carefully and intelligently, with every word chosen to deliver an exact shade of meaning.

"That is all the expression 'highbrow' amounts to. Two of the smoothest comedies ever written are two in which Alfred and I have played, Sil Vara's 'Caprice' and Molnar's 'The Guardsman.' The wrong use of the word highbrow indicates something stodgy and deadly serious. Certainly neither of these plays are anything like that.

"But at the same time they are decidedly highbrow, because their authors, Sil Vara and Molnar, used their talent to put into them more amusingly clever and expressive language."

LYNN FONTANNE TAKES A BRIEF REST ON THE STUDIO SET

PUTTING A GUARDSMAN THROUGH HIS PACES: ALFRED LUNT, ROLAND YOUNG AND DIRECTOR FRANKLIN

Vajda's Rules

THAT "how do you do" and other traditional formulas of introduction are out of place in talking pictures is an interesting theory of Ernest Vajda, noted Hungarian dramatist, who adapted Molnar's "The Guardsman" to the screen.

"Talking pictures have very little time to get over their essential drama," stated Vajda. "They must tell their story in a little over one hour, as against two and one-half hours for a stage play.

"This means that the dialogue and situations used must be shorn of all extraneous matter, and cut quickly through to the core of the central situations.

"The surest sign of an amateur writer is the appearance in a story of conventional salutations, such as 'How do you do?' and 'Permit me to introduce so and so.'

"They happen regularly in real life, it is true, but they can't happen in talkies for they slow down your action too much.

"I have written nearly a score of talkies and I have never yet had one character say 'How do you do?' to another. Of course there are many times when you must preserve the illusion created by these salutations, but the trained screen dramatist does this by writing tricks. He starts his scene just as an introduction has been concluded, or he has a character acknowledge the presence of another by a wave of a hand. There are still other devices, but the main idea is that it is fatal in a talkie to waste valuable dialogue in mere introductions."

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer PICTURE

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